

## *The Night Wanderer*

Night had cast a calm feeling throughout the realms of the undersea. The currents had softened to a gentle swish, brushing seaweed in hypnotic dances as it swept past. The glare of the faraway anglerfish was the only guide through the overcast waters, along with the shafts of moonlight that filtered through the surface. This only worked as an advantage.

The tides had been pulled inwards, creating a thin veil of water above them. A flock of starved gulls circled the area around the beached fish that had misjudged the tidings. The nearby predators feasted on the last remains of their stockpiles, cowering behind the reefs and caves. Nothing would approach the open at this time at night, not when the creature was free to roam the waters.

One set of glowing red eyes peeped curiously from the darkness of a cave, watching as each fish disbanded from the open and into the safety of their homes. It searched wildly into the waves above, searching for any sign of a cargo ship's arrival. It was slightly nervous, but it knew it was the most powerful in the sea, whether or not the kelpies' magic exceeded its strength. The moonlight from above was spotlighted in the centre of the sea.

It was time.

Trying to keep calm, it wrapped its arms around the rocks, and with an effortless thrust, glided into the sea, camouflaged into its surroundings. Its hunger slowly ebbed away at the thought of the kelpies' arrivals. The creature was native to Lemuria, an ancient sunken continent. Lemuria's king, Tempest, was afraid of becoming overshadowed by the soldiers of Atlantis. Though he had other affairs to worry about; such as the 'Above Land' trying to pry into his cities with new technology, but he suspected that it would soon pass if they found nothing. The creature was there to defend that statement. With its massive body, it could easily disguise itself as an island, and when the boats and technology came near, it

would capsize the ship and drag it beneath the waves. It took no more effort.

But there was a problem now; the folk at Atlantis were trying to go against them. They used their kelpies, mermaids, any creature they could find to lure sailors closer to Lemuria's boundaries. At first, King Tempest thought of it as a joke, but then things became serious. Too serious, in fact.

The creature crept up from the alcoves, leaning closer to get a clearer view of the Kelpie Dance. It was another method they used to tempt people closer. A phenomenon, they called it. It was a real game of cat and mouse. The creature was Tempest's last hope.

Suddenly, a huge figure ploughed through the surface, creating a shadow that caused the kelpies to stop their dance and flee. The creature strained its acute sense of sight to see the object clearer. It was another ship, but something was eerily wrong about it. The sails were torn and battered. The whole thing was missing planks and what was left of it was held together by crude nails. The ship creaked as it made its way along the sea.

*This is no Atlantis trick*, the creature thought, struggling to keep its grip on the slippery rocks. It noticed, through the glassy waters, that odd blue flames floated around it, hissing and spluttering like vicious hellfire. The cabin lights were flickering on and off, but no shadows of the humans appeared in the light. The creature cringed as the ship swerved to avoid a cluster of reefs, the bough smashed against a cavern wall. As if a living thing itself, it swivelled left and right just to make sure it wasn't being followed, before the darkness of the cavern swallowed it, leaving no trace of its presence.

*Kraken, do not bother us. If you do, consequences will be dire.*

The creature heard the voice within its head, and it couldn't help but shudder. It knew what it was. Kraken. Killer of the sea. And yet it spoke to the kraken as if it was a baby saltwater crocodile.

*King Tempest would like me to report this*, the kraken thought, its eyes locked on the cavern above. Even if it was to go up to investigate, even though it was the almighty kraken, it knew an

evil lurked within. An evil it couldn't defeat.

Dejectedly, the kraken turned away and glided through the waters, to the illuminating glow of Lemuria in search of King Tempest.

The kraken could've made a safe journey back, if only the kelpies from earlier hadn't been spying on it, sneaking into the treasure caves the kraken had deserted.